

REMARKS

Claims 1-43 are pending in the application. Of these, claims 1-8 and 37-43 are withdrawn, claims 9-13, 18-21, 27-29, and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. 5,152,749 to Giesy et al. (Giesy) in view of U.S. 6,723,107 to Skiba et al. (Skiba), and claims 14-17, 24-25, 29-34, and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Giesy in view of Skiba, and further as a matter of design choice. Claims 9, 14, 18, 21, 26 and 27 are amended, and claim 10 is cancelled.

With respect to claims 9, 18 and 21, each claim makes reference to a slotted connector including first and second legs, and Applicants have amended the claims in response to the Examiner's stated reasons for maintaining the rejection thereof (See Final Office Action, p. 2). In particular, the claims have been amended to incorporate the limitation of claim 10 and provide further clarity as to the direction of the second leg. In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that these claims and their dependent claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the Examiner issue a notice of allowance to that effect.

With respect to claim 27, Applicants have amended the claim as shown above and submit that neither Geisy nor Skiba, whether alone or in combination, teaches or suggests all of the limitations of the claim. Applicants submit that this claim and its dependent claims are also in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the Examiner issue a notice of allowance to that effect.

Claims 14 and 26 have been amended to correct typographical errors. Applicants submit that all amendments are fully supported by the specification, and no new matter has been added.

Application No. 10/642,365
Amendment dated: September 12, 2006
Reply to Office Action of September 12, 2006

Docket No.: MIY-P03-024

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 18-1945, under Order No. MIY-P03-024 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: November 13, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 
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